



The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Ph.D. Doctoral Program in
Early Childhood Education



POLICY HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS
Revised April 12, 2018

This handbook for the Doctoral Program in Early Childhood Education and Development is for the use of students who have been approved for admission. For complete requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, students must consult their program advisor, the UAB Graduate School Catalog where you can find the Graduate Student Handbook, and the UAB Graduate School Policies and Procedures. These documents can be found by browsing the graduate school webpage.

<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/>

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PURPOSE OF THE Ph.D. PROGRAM

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Early Childhood Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is designed to allow the doctoral student to have a tailored curriculum with enough flexibility to meet the needs of individual candidates, while developing a strong developmental foundation in early childhood. Candidates immerse themselves in doctoral level experiences specially designed to focus on early childhood research, teaching, and service. Candidates concentrate on an emphasis or specialization area; either Piagetian Theory (currently inactive), early childhood literacy, early childhood curriculum (currently inactive), early childhood teacher leadership (currently inactive), or pre-K/early intervention/early childhood special education. Preparation focuses on the ability to successfully research and teach at the university level.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Since UAB became an autonomous campus in 1969, the university has risen to become one of the leading public institutions of higher education in the county. The university is among 51 public and private universities (and the only Alabama university) classified by the Carnegie Foundation for both “very high research activity” and “community engagement.” The *Academic Ranking of World Universities* ranks UAB in the top 200 and *The Princeton Review* ranked UAB 5th nationally for diversity.

UAB is a state-of-the-art, 21st century campus with a close-knit, traditional environment comprising 86 city blocks. It is nestled in the serene foothills of the Appalachian Mountains but channels all the energy and opportunity of a cosmopolitan city. The campus is bustling with an array of student organizations and activity, while Birmingham offers a wealth of internships and co-ops, outdoor pursuits and a thriving arts and culture scene. Birmingham is major metropolitan city of some 1.2 million that has evolved into a thriving nexus of medicine, banking, business, and groundbreaking research and development.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The School of Education (SoE) is one of the largest schools at UAB serving more than 1,800 students annually. Programs in the professional education unit at UAB have been designed to support and fulfill the University’s mission to discover, teach, and apply knowledge. The SoE at UAB has developed the following to guide our work and progress:

Vision

Transforming lives to optimize human potential.

Mission

To create knowledge and support professionals to serve in a diverse world.

To help the UAB School of Education actualize our mission, the faculty and staff have pledged to use the following values to guide our work.

Respectful—We treat faculty, staff, students, administrators, external collaborators, and others with respect in all interactions.

Responsive—We address the needs of all of our constituent groups in an appropriate and timely manner.

Innovative—We develop new and effective approaches to addressing critical challenges.

To this end, SoE programs are committed to the following four themes:

- **Learner-centered:** Programs within the School of Education focus on preparing candidates who can support the development of students from early childhood through high school as well as adult learners.
- **Developmental:** Programs within the School of Education support the professional growth and differentiation of teachers, counselors, and administrators as they progress from novice to expert in knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- **Inquiry-focused:** Programs within the School of Education consider inquiry and active reflection to be critical processes in the development of all learners including students, candidates, and faculty.
- **Standards-based:** Programs within the School of Education are based on professional standards and prepare candidates to base their professional practice on standards as well.

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF Ph.D. PROGRAM

A recent national report on the training of early childhood educators noted that although training across multiple age areas is attractive to administrators, candidates may not be highly qualified in early childhood education. To meet the needs of the future early childhood Ph.D., a doctoral degree from UAB will prepare you to be highly qualified and highly knowledgeable and skilled in the three traditional areas of research, teaching, and service.

- **Research and Scholarship:** Courses and experiences are designed for the candidate to become confident and competent in not only reading and applying research, but in designing and implementing studies that guide the field. Complementing the research agenda is an expectation of scholarship (presenting and publishing) contributions to the early childhood field. Faculty mentoring and participation in "emerging scholar communities" help to complement master teachers with research and scholarship skills required at the Ph.D. level.
- **Teaching Experiences:** Candidates are provided opportunities to design, implement, analyze, and evaluate varied pedagogical approaches to early childhood education. As a significant proportion of the Ph.D. program is offered using online asynchronous technology, candidates have the opportunity to develop skills in using and designing

'distance education' that has in the past grown at a faster rate than traditional face-to-face education.

- **Service:** Through close interactions with, and mentoring from the ECE faculty, the ECE doctoral candidate is expected to learn about, develop a service agenda, and provide service through a variety of local, state, national, and international venues.

International Opportunities: As multiple faculty have international backgrounds, opportunities present themselves to research, teach, and serve in international contexts.

Urban Opportunities: Collaborative opportunities with the UAB School of Education, [Center for Urban Education](#) allows Ph.D. candidates to focus scholarship activities on issues related to "quality education for socially and economically disenfranchised groups residing in urban areas."

Literacy: The [Maryann Manning Family Literacy Center](#) sustains Dr. Maryann Manning's legacy of commitment and work in the field of literacy. The Maryann Manning Family Literacy Center supports and disseminates research in literacy, provides professional development for teachers and students, centralizes the operation and organization of numerous projects begun by Dr. Manning, and creates innovative literacy projects, both locally and globally.

STEPS FOR COMPLETION OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

Below is the usual sequence of steps for the Doctor of Philosophy degree which should be completed in five years or less:

Phase 1 – Prerequisite Completion and Completion of Initial Coursework

1. Admission to the Graduate School of UAB/Application to the doctoral program
2. Conditional or Unconditional admission to the doctoral program as recommended by the Doctoral Committee and approved by the program director. Conditional admits must complete prescribed prerequisite courses and/or experiences within a limited timeframe in order to qualify for formal admission.
3. Assignment to an interim advisor based on student interests.
4. Completion of necessary prerequisite courses and experiences as recommended by the doctoral committee and approved by the program director.
5. By the end of the second semester of enrollment there will be assignment of a formal advisor and approval of a program of study by the doctoral committee and program director. The program of study must be consistent with established program requirements and, after approval, must be filed in the student's folder and the departmental office on the form prescribed for that purpose. After initial acceptance of the program, any changes in course work to be taken by the student must be recommended by the Doctoral Committee Chairperson and approved by the Doctoral Committee and filed in the departmental office.

6. Appointment and approval of doctoral committee as recommended by the student, advisor, and approved by the program director and Dean of the Graduate School. Changes to the committee must be approved by the program director and Dean of the Graduate School.
7. Annual review of status of all students by the doctoral committee to evaluate progress toward degree of all students. Students not making satisfactory progress will be identified and will meet with their advisor and program director within three months to determine a course of study or terminate the student's enrollment in the program.

Phase 2 – Formal Admission and Continuation with Ph.D. Coursework

8. Completion of the majority of coursework (minimum 36 hours) of the student's approved program by the end of the term in which the comprehensive examination is taken (minimum 36 credit hours).
9. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination, prepared by the Committee Chairperson, evaluated by the student's Doctoral Committee. The comprehensive exam questions must be reviewed and approved by the Program Director prior to administration. The Committee Chairperson will complete the Evaluation of Comprehensive Examination form after conferring with the student's Doctoral Committee.

Phase 3 – Candidacy and Dissertation Work

10. Approval of the dissertation proposal and admission to candidacy recommended by the student's Doctoral Committee and approved by the Program Director, Departmental Chairperson, and the Graduate School Dean.
11. Admission to candidacy must take place two terms before the completion of the doctoral program.
12. Completion of the dissertation which is supervised and approved by the student's Doctoral Committee Chairperson and the Doctoral Committee. Students must sign up for a minimum of six semester hours of dissertation work for two consecutive semesters.
13. Successful presentation and defense of the dissertation which is scheduled by the Doctoral Program Chair and formally evaluated by the student's Doctoral Committee.
14. Awarding of the degree which is recommended by the Dean of the School and approved by the Graduate School Dean.

Benchmark Requirements

Doctoral students must satisfy the following annual and capstone benchmarks.

- End of first year of fulltime study / end of 18 hours of program
Submit poster session proposal for a regional, national, or international conference. Poster should reflect research conducted during the first 18 hours of the program.
- End of second year of fulltime study/ end of 36 hours of program
Submit article and a state or regional presentation proposal (not poster)
- End of third year of fulltime study / End of Program (54 hours of program)
Submit article or national or international presentation proposal (not poster)
A dissertation that has the potential for development of three articles for publication.

To help meet the requirements of the benchmarks, it is expected that students attend and present at local, state, national and/or international conferences. Joining professional organizations will provide service and scholarly opportunities for the Ph.D. student. Publications by these organizations help to keep the doctoral student informed on recent developments in the field.

Organizations include:

Early Childhood Associations That Help Guide Our Work

The *National Association for the Education of Young Children* - <http://www.naeyc.org/>

The *Association for Childhood Education International* - <http://www.acei.org/>

Research Associations

The *American Education Research Association* - <http://www.aera.net/>

The *Mid-South Education Research Association* - <http://dtm10.cep.msstate.edu/>

Each emphasis area will have organizations that promote the specialty area. Seek advice from faculty members in that area for which organizations offer the best opportunities for professional growth.

COURSE OF STUDY

As background experiences of candidates for a Ph.D. in early childhood education vary significantly, the program requires certain prerequisite courses before a candidate can proceed with doctoral level work. If a candidate has successfully completed all of the prerequisite coursework during a bachelor's, master's or some other program, the Ph.D. program is a minimum of 54 hours of graduate work. Prerequisites are often taken at the bachelors, masters, or Education Specialist degree levels. If a Ph.D. applicant has not taken all of the prerequisite courses, then they can be admitted into the Ph.D. program on condition that they complete the majority of their prerequisite coursework prior to enrolling in more advanced coursework.

Prerequisite Courses

As entry into the doctoral program requires a master's degree in early childhood education or a related field, it is assumed that many if not all of the prerequisite courses have been completed prior to starting a Ph.D. program. If an applicant to the program needs to complete several prerequisite courses, then the student may be admitted to the program with the understanding that they complete certain foundation courses in early childhood prior to engaging in more advanced early childhood study. A list of the prerequisite courses / competencies is as follows:

- Introduction to educational research design
- Introduction to qualitative research methods
- Introductory course at the graduate level in statistical methods of research
- Intermediate course at the graduate level in statistical methods of research
- Curriculum development in early childhood education
- Child development in early childhood education
- A course about the cognitive curriculum or constructivism
- A course related to systematic written analysis of teaching and learning or the demonstration of the ability to write a professional paper. Students may submit a master's thesis, an unpublished piece of work, or a term paper for consideration
- Demonstrated technology proficiency

Ph.D. Formal Coursework. Minimum of 54 hours

Once the prerequisite coursework has been satisfied, as a Ph.D. student, you would take

- 12 credit hours in an early childhood seminar series
- 12+ credit hours in an specialty / emphasis area: Piagetian theory, literacy, early childhood curriculum, early childhood teacher leadership, or Birth to age five at risk / early intervention / early childhood special education
- 6+ hours of focused research internship spread across several semesters
- 12+ credit hours of research methodology
- 12+ credit hours of research that lead to satisfactory completion of a dissertation

Using Prior Coursework Toward the Ph.D.

Prior coursework is often used toward meeting the requirements of the prerequisite coursework. In addition, up to 12 credits of comparable coursework that have not been applied toward meeting the requirements for an earned degree taken at UAB or other institutions may be used to satisfy these course credit requirements upon approval of the graduate program director and the Graduate School Dean. Note that the Graduate School requires only 30 semester credit hours for a master's degree. Any appropriate credit hours earned at UAB beyond 30 semester credit hours may be applied toward a doctoral degree at UAB.

The research requirement at UAB includes at least two semesters in candidacy (12+ dissertation hours) and 12 hours of appropriate research-based coursework. Courses which have been previously applied toward meeting the requirements of another degree are not eligible to satisfy the research credit requirement.

Coursework Leading to a Doctor of Philosophy in Early Childhood Education

Once prerequisites are met, the Ph.D. is a minimum of 54 hours made up of core, specialty, research, and dissertation hours. Students may apply for candidacy after 36 hours, with up to 6 hours being non-dissertation research credits.

Courses	Credit Hrs
A. Core Classes – 12 credit hours	
ECE 730 – Issues in Developmental Theory - Historical, sociological, and psychological influences on theories of development.	3
ECE 731 – Children and Society - Societal influences on child development. Role of family and various agencies in different cultures.	3
ECE 749 – Advanced Early Childhood Curriculum - Historical, philosophical, psychological, and social thought influencing curriculum in early childhood education	3
One course from ECE 730+ level coursework. Examples include:	
ECE 732 - History of Early Childhood	
ECE 735 - Meaning and Development of Play - Nature of play, its importance and how it is nurtured. Prerequisite: Master's degree.	3

ECE 737 - **Parent, Child, School Interface** - Historical development of parent involvement. Theoretical bases of family-school interactions. Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program.

ECE 748 - **Research in Infancy** - Theoretical and empirical evidence relating to psychomotor domain.

ECE 792 - **Directed Readings in Research** - Review of research in early childhood education to gain understanding of conceptual and methodological basis.

B. Specialty Area – 12+ credit hours at the doctoral level

12+

All coursework must be approved by the ECE doctoral faculty. Other coursework at discretion of the committee.

B1: Early Intervention / Pre-K, Young Children at Risk – Four courses (12 hrs) from:

ECE 738 - **The Consultation Process and the Young Child** - Problem areas affecting infants, toddlers, and young children; skills for working with families and community agencies.

ECE 740 - **Research Apprenticeship** - Planning, implementation, analysis, and presentation of research.

ECE 748 - **Research in Infancy** - Theoretical and empirical evidence relating to psychomotor domain. Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program in early childhood education.

ECE 760 - **Current Issues in Infant, Toddler, & Early Childhood Education**

ECE 792 - **Directed Readings in Research** - Review of research in early childhood education to gain understanding of conceptual and methodological basis.

Or B2: Piagetian Studies Currently Inactive - Four courses (12 hrs):

ECE 742 – **Piaget: Theory and Research I** – Jean Piaget’s theory, application to early childhood education; physical and social (conventional) knowledge. Representation and memory, logico-mathematical knowledge. Prerequisite: Master’s degree and EEC 672.

ECE 743 – **Piaget: Theory and Research II** – Jean Piaget’s theory, application to early childhood education; physical and social (conventional) knowledge. Representation and memory, logico-mathematical knowledge. Prerequisite: Master’s degree and EEC 672.

ECE 744 – **Piaget: Theory and Research III** – Jean Piaget’s theory, application to early childhood education; physical and social (conventional) knowledge. Representation and memory, logico-mathematical knowledge. Prerequisite: Master’s degree and EEC 672.

ECE 745 – **Piaget: Theory and Research IV** – Jean Piaget’s theory, application to early childhood education; physical and social (conventional) knowledge. Representation and memory, logico-mathematical knowledge. Prerequisite: Master’s degree and EEC 672.

Or B3: Curriculum – Individually designed - Four courses (12 hrs):

ECE 746 - **Contemporary Issues in American Science Education** - Crisis atmosphere surrounding science education in American classroom.

Prerequisites: Graduate course in development or educational psychology and admission to doctoral program.

ECE 760 - **Current Issues in Infant, Toddler, & Early Childhood Education**
- 3 hours.

and **two** courses from

ECE 742, ECE 743, ECE 744, ECE 745

Or B4: Literacy - Four courses (12 hrs):

ECE 750 - **Literacy Before School** - Written language development of preschool children. Prerequisites: Master's degree and two courses in language development.

ECE 751 - **Schooling and Literacy Instruction** - Primary-level literacy instruction and children's literacy development. Prerequisites: Admission to doctoral program in early childhood education and two courses in language development.

ECE 752 - **Theory and Research on Literacy Development and Instruction** - Philosophical and psychological beliefs regarding literacy development. Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program in early childhood education.

ECE 774 - **Advanced Seminar in Language Development** - Relationship of thinking and knowing to language development; strategies for analysis; strengths and weaknesses of techniques of examining language development. Prerequisites: Master's degree and one course in language development or equivalent.

Or B5: Early Childhood Teacher Leader Currently Inactive –Three/four courses (12-15 hrs) approved by the ECE doctoral faculty

ECE 700+ leadership courses not taken at the Ed.S. level

EDL 711 – Collaborative Problem Solving. Includes: EDL 711-L field exp. and EDL 711-R research project

EDC 731 – Curricular Design and Implementation. Includes: EDC 731-L field exp. and EDL 731-R research project

EPR 700 – Data Based Decision Making. Includes: EDL 700-L field exp. and EDL 700-R research project

EDC 732 – Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction. Includes: EDL 732-L field exp. and EDL 732-R research project

ECT 720 – Universal Design for Learning. Includes: EDL 720-L field exp. and EDL 720-R research project

EDL 735 – Professional Leadership. Includes: EDL 735-L field exp. and EDL 735-R research project

C. Research Methodology – 12 credit hours at 600 or 700 level

EPR 696 – Qualitative Research

3

EPR 710 – Multivariate Research

3

Qualitative, Quantitative, Mixed Methods tracks

6

Qualitative Research - 6 hours of courses from the following:

EPR 792 or SOC 708, EPR 796, other courses at discretion of committee (e.g., ECE 733, 740, 741, 748, 792, 793, or 794)

Quantitative research - 6 hours of courses from the following:

EPR 792 , EPR 695, EPR 793, HB 714, SOC 704, PY 727, BST 640, BST 661, BST 671, SOC 706, other courses at discretion of committee (e.g., ECE 733, 740, 741, 748, 792, 793, or 794)

Mixed Methods research - 6 hours of courses from the following:

EPR 792, EPR 790, NRM 778Q, NRM 779Q

D. Research Internship – 6 credit hours

ECE 798 – Non-dissertation Research: 3 hours in first 18 hours of study **3**

ECE 798 – Non-dissertation Research: Additional 3 hours prior to application to candidacy (minimum of 36 hrs) **3**

E. Dissertation – 12 + hours

ECE 799 – **Dissertation Research** - Prerequisite: Admission to candidacy. 3-12 **12+** hours. Two consecutive semesters of at least 6 hours each

SPECIALIZATION AREAS

Courses in the specialization area focus on more advanced knowledge and skills leading to the ability to teach within specialization areas at the college level, and engage in research and scholarship.

Early Childhood Literacy

Coursework leading to advanced knowledge of language and literacy. Content covers the philosophical and theoretical groundwork leading to recent developments in early childhood and elementary education.

Early Childhood Curriculum – Currently Inactive

Historical, theoretical, and developmental study of curriculum. Courses focus on the developmental nature of content courses and content delivery as a function of children’s development and learning.

Piagetian Theory – Currently Inactive

Sequence of courses to examine Piaget’s scientific theory. The courses emphasize the long-range, overall aim of education envisioned by Piaget, which is children’s development of sociomoral and intellectual autonomy.

B to Age 5 Specialty: Pre-K Education/Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

Advanced study of the teaching, development, and learning of young children that exhibit special educational needs and children in pre-k programs. Courses will focus on assessment and evaluation, program planning, collaborative teaming (e.g., Coaching), and instructional delivery of practices founded in evidence-based recommended practice.

Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy in Education – Currently Inactive

Study of organization theory, leadership theory, ethical dilemmas for leadership personnel, and interpersonal competence. Please note that the courses do not lead to education leadership certification within the state.

DOCTORAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Students have the right and the responsibility to assist in the formation of a Doctoral Committee to guide them for the remainder of the doctoral program. Doctoral graduate study committees should consist of at least five graduate faculty members, each of whom should be able to contribute some relevant insight and expertise to guide the student and must have credential equal to or exceeding that of the degree the student is pursuing. In addition, one or two committee member(s) should be from outside the student's graduate specialization. In all cases, at least three of the committee must be comprised of UAB Graduate Faculty members. Committee members who are not already UAB Graduate Faculty, must be granted Ad Hoc Graduate Faculty status. The Chairperson must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty (<https://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-faculty-list>). This committee will be recommended to the program director, and to the graduate school dean for approval.

The committee members may serve in a variety of capacities. They may provide advisement; research, teaching, or service opportunities; help develop the comprehensive exam questions; or support the student as the research methodologist. Students and faculty benefit from close contact and it is the student's responsibility to take the initiative to maintain this relationship.

The student should initiate the process of forming a committee by downloading the appropriate form from the graduate school website and filling out / circulating the appropriate materials. <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/online-forms> - look for the "Graduate Study Committee letter".

Any changes to the graduate study committee should be made by filling out the "Change of Graduate Study Committee" form and submitting the document to the graduate school.

GUIDELINES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Students must have completed the majority of coursework (minimum 36 hours) of the student's approved program by the end of the term in which the comprehensive examination is taken. The comprehensive examination will consist of questions in four areas: curriculum and curriculum theory, history and/or child development, research methods linked to dissertation methodology, and a specialized question[s] linked to the dissertation topic and reflective of the courses taken in the emphasis area.

The written examination will be taken in three separate sittings. In each area there will be questions on theory, application, and evaluation. Specific questions for the student will be formulated by the student's Doctoral Committee. These questions will be presented to the

Director of the Doctoral Program who will arrange the time(s), place(s), and proctors(s) for the examination in conjunction with the student.

The comprehensive examination will be offered during each semester. The student's course of study is reviewed by the student's Doctoral Committee before the comprehensive examination is scheduled. Students will apply the semester preceding the one in which they schedule their comprehensive examination. An individual may also submit a formal request to write the exam in their native language (non-English). The formal request letter must be submitted to the Doctoral Program Committee at the same time that the application for the comprehensive examination is made. Decisions about taking the exam in another language will be made on individual basis and, if accepted, an indication of how this will be done will be provided by the committee.

All students will have an oral defense of the comprehensive examination which will be scheduled within a month after the written examination is completed. Students may review their answers before their defense. At the oral examination, students may be asked to clarify or defend responses. Additionally, students will be asked to answer other questions on issues and concerns in early childhood education and development. When scheduling the examination, students should remember that their Committee members must all read the entire completed written examination and should be present for the oral defense. Committee members will return the scoring sheet to the student's Doctoral Committee Chair within two weeks after receipt. Following the question portion of the oral examination, the student will be asked to leave the room while the final decisions by the Committee are made. Results (written and oral) will be given to the student by the Doctoral Committee before the close of the oral examination.

Scoring the Comprehensive Examination

Key: 4 = Pass with Commendation
 3 = Pass
 2 = Pass with Remediation
 1 = Fail

Passing Scores

Pass or Pass with Commendation: If the average score on any question is 3 or 4, no remediation is required but questions could be asked at the oral examination.

Pass with Remediation: If the average score on any questions is below 3.0, the student will be questioned concerning the answer during the oral examination, and remediation may be recommended. If, after the oral examination, any remediation is recommended, the student will work with his or her Doctoral Committee Chairperson to plan the steps to be taken. These could include additional coursework, reading, tutoring, or a combination of these. The student should complete remediation and/or rewrite the answer within the next two semesters. The Doctoral Committee Chairperson and Committee members will read the answers which are re-written. The students may be asked to answer any concerns orally in a meeting with the Committee. The student will be notified of the results within a month of the completion of the re-writing. The Program Director will be notified in writing when remediation is completed.

Failing Scores

The student whose average score is in the fail range (below 2) should be advised by the Doctoral Committee to complete a plan of remediation within the time agreed on by the student and Committee, and re-write the comprehensive examination. If the student fails a second time, another opportunity is not available. If the student passes with remediation, one more opportunity is available (See policy above concerning “Pass with remediation”).

CANDIDACY AND THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

Admission To Candidacy

Admission to candidacy is the final phase of the Ph.D. program. Once the student has completed the majority of their Ph.D. coursework, they may apply to be admitted to candidacy.

Applications for admission to candidacy are submitted when students have: (1) successfully completed a minimum of 36 credit hours of coursework on the approved program of study, (2) successfully passed the comprehensive examination, (3) gained approval for their dissertation proposal, and (4) have approval for a study by the UAB Institutional Review Board. The decision to admit students to candidacy for the degree is made on recommendation of the early childhood doctoral committee to the graduate school.

The Dissertation Proposal

Before admission to candidacy, the doctoral students, under the direction of their Doctoral Committee Chairperson (and with appropriate assistance from the Committee members), will develop and present to their Committee a formal dissertation proposal. This proposal represents a blueprint for the dissertation. It will include the following elements:

1. A clear statement of the topic or the problem to be investigated.
2. A justification for the research including:
 - a. Hypotheses, if any, to be examined and/or tested.
 - b. The significance of the study.
 - c. A review of relevant literature.
 - d. The anticipated outcomes and/or the contributions to professional knowledge that will result from the study.
3. A description of the method to be employed in the study including:
 - a. Method to be used to collect data.
 - b. Description of and justification for any instruments to be employed in the study.
 - c. Description of and justification for procedures to be used in analyzing and presenting the data.
 - d. Limitations of the study.

When ready, the student will present the proposal to his/her Doctoral Committee. The committee will take one of the following actions:

- a. Accept the proposal without changes.

- b. Approve the proposal with specific revisions. These revisions will be overseen by the Committee Chairperson. When they have been completed. Committee members will receive a revised proposal for their approval and signature.
- c. Non-approval of the proposal. In this case the candidate must repeat the process.

The student, with approval of the Doctoral Committee Chairperson, arranges the Committee meeting for the formal approval of the proposal. It must be signed by all members of the Committee, the Doctoral Program Director/Department Chair, and then approved and signed by the Graduate Dean. Any variation from the proposed research must have prior approval of Committee members. At this point, once the IRB has given full stamped approval, the doctoral student may apply via The Graduate School for Graduate Candidacy.

Dissertation Work

Working under the supervision of the Committee Chair, the student works on the dissertation, prepares the dissertation, and submits chapters to the Committee as they are completed. The committee members will make suggestions concerning possible changes. Once the entire dissertation is completed in accordance with Theses and Dissertation: A Guide to Preparation (available from the Graduate School), the Committee Chairperson will arrange for the formal oral defense. The complete volume is submitted to Doctoral Committee members at least two weeks before this defense of the dissertation. The defense will be open to faculty and students and must follow the guidelines of the Graduate School.

Dates and Timelines

The graduate school has developed specific dates and timelines for admission to candidacy, successful defense of the dissertation, and graduation. As these dates change each year with a new academic calendar, it is the responsibility of the Ph.D. candidate to review these timelines and work with the doctoral committee so that anticipated graduation dates are met. Please check the following

<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-school-quicklinks/deadline-dates>

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

The usual minimal period in which the doctoral degree can be earned is three academic years of full-time study, or longer if the student has periods of part-time enrollment. The nature of doctoral study requires the closest contact between the student and the faculty of the graduate program, and the individual investigation or other special work leading to the dissertation must be done directly under the guidance and supervision of a full member of the UAB graduate faculty. Therefore, Ph.D. students should be in residence (enrolled) for three full semesters each year including summers during a three year period or collectively a minimum of nine semesters if the student has to take a leave or stop out during the course of their Ph.D. education.

TIME LIMITATION

1. Unless the student has maintained close contact with the field of early childhood education and development, course credits must be validated by special examination after a lapse of five years and may not be validated after seven years.
2. The minimum period in which the doctoral degree can be earned is three academic years of full-time graduate study above the Master's degree or the equivalent in part-time work.
3. Students must complete their program within five years from the date of admission to the doctoral program unless an exception is granted by the Program Director and Dean of the Graduate School at the request of the student and with approval of the faculty advisor.

EXCEPTIONS TO POLICIES IN THESE GUIDELINES

Any exception to the policies and requirements stated in these guidelines must be recommended by the faculty advisor, with a supporting statement giving the reasons for the exception, and must be approved by the Doctoral Program Director and the Dean of the School of Education.

FACULTY

Faculty	Research Interests
Lois Christensen, Ph.D.	• Social studies and justice inspired approaches • Early childhood education • Reggio Emilia • Women's issues.
Ann Dominick, Ed.D.	• Supports necessary to help teachers shift their practice toward inquiry-based teaching • Impact on student achievement when teachers delay the teaching of standard algorithms • Effect of teaching using the CCRS for Mathematical practice on teachers and students • Effect of rehearsal coaching on preservice teachers' teaching practice
James Ernest, Ph.D.	• Effectiveness of pre-k programs • Coaching as a tool for professional development • Diverse views of developmentally appropriate practices development Research/Scholarship
Kelly Hill, Ph.D.	• Early Childhood Education • Emergent Bilingual Learners
Grace Jepkemboi, Ph.D.	• Child development-especially children in difficult circumstances, e.g. those affected by AIDS and refugee children. • Curriculum development
Jennifer Summerlin, Ph.D.	• Children's literature and language arts • Reading

Lynn Kirkland, • Literacy • Summer learning • Teacher education • Early Childhood Education
Ed.D.
